



*State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913*

*PH (517) 373.3543 | FAX (517) 373.0927*

*[www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/hammerstrom/](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/hammerstrom/)*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 23, 2004

CONTACT: Amy Zaagman  
1-888-477-8238

## **Advance Directives to Include Mental Health Treatment Decisions**

**LANSING** – Legislation to empower patient advocates to make mental health treatment decisions recently passed the Michigan Senate, announced Sen. Beverly S. Hammerstrom, R-Temperance.

Senate Bill 1464, sponsored by Hammerstrom, amends the Estates and Protected Individuals Code (EPIC) to allow an individual to name a patient advocate for mental health treatment that would have the same authority and operate within the same decisional parameters as those currently established for medical treatment decisions.

“We should all have a patient advocate, someone who knows our health care wishes and will communicate them when we are not able to do so ourselves,” Hammerstrom said. “For many people, this additional legal recognition that allows a patient advocate to make mental health treatment decisions will be a relief and a comfort.”

SB 1464 has eight companion bills, SBs 1465-1472, that make necessary changes to other sections of statutes ensuring recognition of patient advocates for mental health treatment.

Hammerstrom, who chairs the Senate Health Policy Committee, said the committee’s attention was drawn to the need for a mental health advance directive in Michigan statute during testimony on the “Kevin’s Law” package of bills, SBs 683-686.

Kevin’s Law, named for Kevin Heisinger who was assaulted and killed by a mentally ill person who was not compliant with treatment, would allow family members and others to intervene and help secure needed treatment for individuals with mental illness before they become a danger to themselves and/or others.

“These two packages of bills are necessary precautions and provide further protection for some of our state’s most vulnerable residents,” Hammerstrom said. “Unfortunately, circumstances arise where individuals may be ordered to seek mental health treatment, and this legislation ensures their wishes will be honored even if they are incapable of making decisions on their own.”

“By including mental health treatment decisions in the patient advocate law, my colleagues and I are again closing the gap between mental health treatment and physical health treatment,” Hammerstrom said.

SBs 1464-1472 and 683-686 are currently in the House of Representatives, where action is anticipated in the next several weeks.

###